

REMARKS/ARGUMENT

Applicants appreciate the allowance of Claims 2, 5, 6, 8, 15, and 22, and the allowability of Claims 9, 12, 16, 18 and 23 if submitted in an amendment cancelling the non-allowable claims.

In order to secure early patent protection for certain claims, Applicants have cancelled Claims 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, and 23 without disclaimer or prejudice to their right to re-present them at a later time. Accordingly, Claims 2, 6, 8, 12, 14, 20, and 21 remain pending in the application with Claims 2, 6, 8, and 12 having been indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

Claims 14 and 20 have been amended by inserting into each claim the limitations of the parent claim from which it depends. As amended, these claims are believed to recite clearly patentable distinctions from the Sadakata reference as discussed more fully below.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge receipt of the Information Disclosure Statement filed on November 10, 2003. A copy of the Statement (and the postcard receipt) is attached for the Examiner's convenience.

With specific reference to Claims 14 and 20, Applicants respectfully point out that the Sadakata

reference discloses no embodiments wherein the radially outermost points of contact of the stopper portions on the hollow shaft member with the stopper faces on the joint member are disposed inwardly from respective centers of the stopper faces in a radial direction. On the contrary, in each of the embodiments illustrated in Sadakata the stopper portions on the hollow shaft member extend radially beyond the center of the contact surfaces on the joint portions of the claimed elastic shaft coupling.

Specifically, as to Sadakata's "first embodiment" (illustrated in Figures 1-7 and described at column 8, line 1 to column 12), line 14, Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 depict the protruding segments 10a, 10a on transmission member 21 on inner shaft 2a (column 8, lines 62-67) extending into notches 17 (column 10, lines 54-56). The faces of notches 17 that contact the protruding portions 10a are not specifically referenced in Figures 1-8. However, it may be readily seen in Figures 1 and 2 that the radially outward ends of the protrusions 10a extend to the outer edge of the contact faces of notches 17.

Similarly in Sadakata's "second embodiment", illustrated in Figure 8 (column 12, lines 15-50) protrusions 10a extend to the outermost edge of the contact faces of notches 17.

Again in Sadakata's third embodiment (illustrated in Figures 9-12 and described at column 12, line 51 - column 13, line 30), protrusions on the transmission member 8a extend to the outer edge of the contact faces of notches 17 on the outer member of the joint (note especially Figure 10).

In Sadakata's fourth embodiment illustrated in Figures 16-17 and described at column 13, line 31 - column 16, line 22), the outer ends of the protruded segments 110a (column 13, lines 47-54) extend more than halfway from the radially inner edge of the contact faces of notches 117 (contact faces not specifically referenced, but readily identified in Figure 16) to the radially outer edge thereof (see especially Figure 16).

In Sadakata's fifth embodiment (illustrated in Figures 18-19 and described at column 16, lines 23-59), the outer ends of the protruded segments 110a extend more than halfway from the radially inner edge of the contact faces of notches 117 (contact faces not specifically referenced, but readily identified in Figures 18 and 19) to the radially outer edge thereof (see especially Figure 19).

In Sadakata's sixth and seventh embodiments illustrated in Figures 20 and 21 and described at column 16, line 60 - column 17, line 38), the outer ends of

the protruded segments 110a extend all the way to the radially outward edges of the contact faces of notches 117 (contact faces not specifically referenced, but readily identified in Figures 20 and 21).

In Sadakata's eighth embodiment (illustrated in Figure 22 and described at column 17, lines 39-65), the outer ends of the protruded segments 110a can be readily seen to extend more than halfway from the radially inner edge of the contact faces of notches 117 (contact faces not specifically referenced, but readily identified in Figure 22) to the radially outer edge thereof.

In Sadakata's illustrations of the prior art as well, any protruding portions of an inner member extend all the way to the outer edges of a contact surface. See Figure 15 (described at column 1, lines 49-60), wherein protruding members 10 extend to the outer edge of the contact faces of notches 17. (Note that Figure 14 is a cross-sectional figure that does not show protruding members 10.) In Figures 23-25 a similar relationship is evident between pin 124 and holes 123 or notches 117 (column 2, line 62 - column 3, line 23).

Accordingly, Claims 14 and 20 are patentably distinguished from the disclosures of the Sadakata

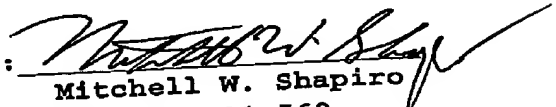
reference and allowance of these claims is specifically urged.

In view of the above amendments and discussion, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been requested separately, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully requested,

By:


Mitchell W. Shapiro
Reg. No. 31,568

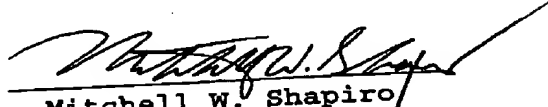
MWS:GWS:jb

Miles & Stockbridge P.C.
1751 Pinnacle Drive
Suite 500
McLean, Virginia 22102-3833
(703) 903-9000
March 9, 2003

George W. Swenson
Reg. No. 25,461

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on March 9, 2004.


Mitchell W. Shapiro